

Nixon Scores Senators for Godley Veto

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President Nixon charged the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday with a "deplorable" act of "retribution" for rejecting G. McMurtie Godley to be an assistant secretary of state.

The committee's refusal Wednesday to confirm the former U.S. ambassador to Laos for the State Department policy-making post renewed old bitterness between the White House and the committee over U.S. policy in Indochina.

Both sides agreed that the rejection of career diplomat Godley went beyond personalities and was a symbolic act in the unended Indochina dispute. But they disagreed completely over just what it symbolized.

In a statement issued by the White House, the President charged that the rejection of his nominee could undermine the independence of the U.S. Foreign Service by penalizing career diplomats for faithfully carrying out policies opposed by some members of Congress. Secretary of State William P. Rogers, in a supporting statement, said the action raises "profound questions for a career service which is charged with carrying out policy under whatever administration it serves."

Committee sources labeled that "a fake issue." The rejection of the Godley appointment was a symbol, instead, one said, of the committee's

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reaction "to a pattern of arrogant unresponsiveness" by the executive branch to the right of Congress to share in the shaping of foreign policy.

Another committee source saw the rejection as a defeat of Nixon administration attempts "to isolate and humiliate Fulbright." He said a majority of the committee "stood together under immense pressure" to block the Godley appointment.

By a 9-to-7 vote on Wednesday, the committee postponed indefinitely Godley's appoint-

ment as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, and voted to advise the Secretary of State to assign Godley to a post "other than one related to Southeast Asia."

On a 12-to-3 vote Wednesday the committee, over Fulbright's opposition, approved the nomination of William H. Sullivan to be ambassador to the Philippines. The Senate yesterday confirmed Sullivan's nomination without debate.

Sullivan had been Godley's predecessor as ambassador to Laos, before becoming a deputy assistant secretary of state and the department's ranking expert on Vietnam. Sullivan served as a deputy to presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger in the recent Vietnam peace talks.

The earlier nomination of Godley and Sullivan had been a sore point, as well.

Fulbright and a majority of committee members bridled last spring when President Nixon sent up their names plus the nomination of Graham A. Martin as ambassador to South Vietnam.

These appointments, Fulbright charged, represented the perpetuation of a "clique" that was instrumental in helping develop and carry out what he called a disastrous policy in Indochina. Fulbright insisted there would be new men on Southeast Asian policy, representing a break with the past.

Martin's appointment was cleared last month with strong

intervention by the White House, and on June 28 Rogers was urged in a private meeting with the committee to assign Godley and Sullivan to non-Asian posts. But Rogers insisted on an "up or down" vote, committee members said.

Before Wednesday's voting, opposition to Sullivan was diminished by his own further testimony behind closed doors and by behind-the-scenes intervention by former ambassador W. Averell Harriman, under whom Sullivan served in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations.

Godley, in effect, was singled out as the symbol for committee rebellion because he was the highest-ranking nominee and because he also was regarded as the most enthusiastic supporter of U.S. military intervention in Indochina.

In Laos, Godley and Sullivan both served virtually in a pro-consul role, overseeing

military and diplomatic operations, including the actions of CIA-organized Meo and Thai forces. The bluff, activist Godley was dubbed "Field Marshal Godley"—and readily admitted he relished his work.

It now appears likely that, after an interval, Godley will be named to a less controversial post.

President Nixon, in the statement issued by the White House, said, "It is deplorable that this distinguished Foreign Service officer should be penalized for faithfully carrying out the policies of his government, which were not set by him."

"The consequences of this committee action go far beyond the injustice done to an outstanding Foreign Service officer. It is not in the interest of the Foreign Service or the United States that career officers become subject to retribution or diligent execution of their instructions."



G. McMURTRIE GODLEY
... symbolic target

In contrast to the President's and Rogers' statements, sources at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee countered that the committee's record of action in support of the Foreign Service shows the administration's alleged concern to be wholly unwarranted.